United Nations A/54/784

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 March 2000
English
Original: French

Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 116 (b)
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Letter dated 3 March 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw to your attention the statement concerning the decision by the Parliament of Ukraine to abolish the death penalty and to ratify Protocol 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, issued on 29 February 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the text of this letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 116 (b).

(Signed) António **Monteiro**
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations

00-33182 (E) 090300 100300

Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement concerning the decision by the Parliament of Ukraine to abolish the death penalty and to ratify Protocol 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, issued on 29 February 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the decision of the Parliament of Ukraine to abolish the death penalty and to ratify Protocol 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the abolition of the death penalty.

The European Union considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights and reaffirms its objective to work towards its universal abolition or at least the introduction of moratoria on executions as a first step towards that aim.

The decisions of the Ukrainian Parliament on the abolition of the death penalty and on the ratification of Protocol 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the first in international law to make the abolition of the death penalty a legal obligation for the contracting parties, constitute very important steps towards the protection of human rights in Ukraine and the universal abolition of the death penalty, which is the ultimate goal of the European Union as set forth in the European Union Declaration and guidelines adopted in June 1998.

These important decisions also contribute to the achievement of the aims contained in the common strategy on Ukraine regarding the promotion of human rights and strengthen the strategic partnership between the European Union and Ukraine.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.